

Department of Defense Bloggers Roundtable With Major General John A. Toolan Jr. Via Teleconference Subject: Accomplishments, Challenges and Sacrifices of Marines and Coalition Forces in Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) Time: 2:07 p.m. EDT Date: Monday, April 23, 2012

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WILLIAM SELBY (Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs): Good afternoon. This is William Selby. Who is joining us?

STAFF: Hey, William. This is Major Scallis (ph). We have General Toolan here on standby. He'll be joining us in a few minutes.

MR. SELBY: Yes, sir. We have all the bloggers on the -- well, seven of the nine that signed up on the line right now. So we can get started whenever you're ready, sir. Just let us know.

MR. : Let y'all go. If you need anything, just let us --

MR. : Great. MAJOR GENERAL JOHN TOOLAN: Hey, this is John Toolan. And I don't know how you want to do it. You want to just kind of open it up for questions, or --

MR. SELBY: Well, sir, I'm going to say my -- and give my opening statement and set out the rules for the bloggers on the line, which most of them have done these before, so they understand the rules. And then if you have an opening statement, you could say that, or we could go directly to questions from the bloggers. It's your call, sir.

GEN. TOOLAN: Give you a quick opening statement, and then we can go from there.

MR. SELBY: Roger that, sir.

All right, well, with that, I'd like to welcome everybody on the line to our Department of Defense Bloggers Roundtable for Monday, April 23rd, 2012. My name is William Selby with the Office of the Secretary of Defense Public Affairs, and I'll be moderating the call today.

Today we are honored to have as our guest Major General John A. Toolan Jr., who recently completed a yearlong deployment in Afghanistan

in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He concurrently commanded Regional Command Southwest and II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) and will be discussing the accomplishments, challenges and sacrifices of Marines and coalition forces under his command.

To the bloggers on the line today: Please remember to clearly state your name and organization in advance of your question. Respect the general's time and keep your questions succinct and to the point. And if you are not asking a question, we ask that you please place your phone on mute.

And with that, sir, the floor is yours for your opening statement.

GEN. TOOLAN: Hi. Thank you for taking the time to hear me out. I think it's important that I try and get the message about what's been accomplished this past year while we were in Afghanistan.

And I just want to -- I kind of want to highlight of couple of things. I think 2011-2012, during that year it was an opportunity for us to do a couple of things. First of all, I -- you know, we were able to distribute what I call the force densities throughout the Helmand and Nimroz province, the two provinces that comprise my AO in Regional Command Southwest. Having those sufficient force densities in the population centers in those provinces helped bring a level of stability that then the Afghan national security forces were able to build upon.

Secondly, the Afghan national security forces really developed what I call -- began to professionalize while we were there. The training with -- the three key elements of building an Afghan security force was capability -- the training really that we provided helped build their capabilities; their capacity, meaning the numbers of security forces grew during this period of time for a lot of reasons, but one is -- has been particularly that people felt that if they contributed to the Afghan national security forces, that they were actually contributing to eventually what would be the winning side; and then lastly is, you know, we really saw the fruition of investment and development in the AO where we beat -- we were able to things like secure the roads, open up roads and then secure the Kajaki Dam, which -- and the -- will certainly serve to improve economic development in the province for the years to come.

I think, you know, we took our last piece of real estate when we went up to Kajaki in October. And just unlike other operations, we were able to go into Kajaki without really damaging infrastructure or causing very much -- very many civilian casualties. It was, in a lot of ways, a textbook operation that was conducted by ground forces that were able to secure Kajaki and move Afghan security forces up there to protect the dam.

Together, you know, there was a lot -- there was a lot of things that were done to help then blend the district centers -- in sort of General Petraeus' term, thickened -- we thickened the security within the Helmand River basin. We connected districts and villages together, and we did it by getting the security forces in there, but then also too,

interestingly enough, through improvements of the roads, the building the roads and actually getting mobile phones up and running. And you know, it was interesting how that connection paid huge dividends once we were able to get the cellphone companies out of the hands of the insurgents and back into legitimate government. So I think those are some good things. I'll tell you that we are -- I'm concerned that there is still a host of threats. You know, there's still a ruthless and cunning Taliban leader that, although the leadership is operating at a quite a -- you know, they're conducting and retaining control by murder and intimidation. I think, you know, poppy and the drugs and impact on the insurgency is still something that needs to be dealt with. I believe that the ANSF can handle the threat, but they got -- they've got to make sure that they're maintained and resourced properly.

And then lastly, I -- the threat that's probably most challenging is the corruption and the threat of corruption that can occur in Afghanistan. And I look at two levels of corruption. One is the parasitic corruption, which I think is evident up in the central government with people like Sher Mohammad Akhundzada, who is somebody who's been a thorn on the side of Governor Mangal, who I've been working with and who's been the governor the past three and a half years. And the -- unfortunately, you know, some of those central government officials are making money on the drug industry. They've got -- they're negative influences in the provinces, and they got too much say up in the central government.

But we need to keep -- you know, it's much like any parasite: It needs a weak host to survive and unless that government of Afghanistan continues to strengthen, these parasites continue to negatively influence its progress.

And then, lastly, is the -- what I call predatory corruption, which really is the corruption of -- the threat of it is among the Afghan national security forces in the province who can prey on the public by taking advantage of their power and their authority and, you know, collecting taxes to taking land away.

So those are kind of the pluses and minuses, and I'm glad to turn it over to you for questions.

MR. SELBY: Thank you very much, sir.

And sir, you still there?

GEN. TOOLAN: Yes, I am.

MR. SELBY: Oh, OK, and our first blogger that was online today was Anand.

You can go ahead with your question. Just remember to state your organization, Anand.

Q: Hi, this is Anand; Registan.net is the organization.

Major General Toolan, a question: If ISAF pulls back to advisers and combat enablers only in Helmand 12 months from now, can the 215th ANA corps, the Helmand ANP, and the NDS win the war in Helmand?

GEN. TOOLAN: Yeah, Anand, I didn't get the last part of that question. Could you say that again?

Q: OK, if 12 months from now --

GEN. TOOLAN: Right.

Q: -- all ISAF pulls back to combat enablers and advisers only in Helmand, can 215th ANA Corps, Helmand ANP, and the National Directorate of Security win the war in Helmand?

GEN. TOOLAN: Yeah, well, you obviously know the area and, you know, there's -- there are definitely challenges for the Afghan national security forces, both as -- I mean, really it runs the gamut: ANA, AUP, ABP, NDS and of course the ANCOP (ph). I believe that the Afghan security forces are better led, better trained and better equipped than the insurgents.

When I talk about being better led, we've made it -- made a concerted effort to bring in, you know, leadership. General Maluk (ph), who's a 215th Corps commander is a -- is an exceptional leader. He's honest, he's forthright, and he's got the respect of his brigade commanders. And the brigade commanders are good, and really many of the young officers are talented and educated. The challenge is at the NCO level, and it is something that -- we need more time to help build an NCO corps. But I think that the leadership overall -- when you compare it with what the Taliban have, which is really senior leaders that are not present on the battlefield -- they are in safe havens in Quetta -- and the people are legitimately asking questions, like, well, why is it that I gotta sacrifice, while this senior Taliban leader's giving directions from the safety of, you know, Quetta?

As far as equipment's concerned, the Afghan security forces are much better equipped than the Taliban. I mean, they have weapons, and they've got equipment. The police sometimes complain about not having the heavy weapons that they need in order to confront the insurgents. But we hesitate to give them that kind of equipment because, in reality, they're real role is community policing, not paramilitary operations. But the ANA is there backing up the police and will be for the next couple of years. So I think they're -- (equipment-wise ?) they're in better shape.

I would like to say that the Afghan police in particular need to be outfitted with better counter-IED equipment because they're the ones confronting, in many cases, the IEDs in the populated centers. And then, lastly, you know, as far as training's concerned, our Afghans are going -- we've developed some great training venues for the Afghans across the board and certainly, when you compare the training of the Afghans with the (Talibans ?), there's no comparison.

So I believe that they'll be able to hold the line. I will say the one caveat that goes across, you know, everything I -- that I talk about here is that if predatory corruption's allowed to exist, you know, particularly among any of those organizations and they lose the support of the local nationals, then the game's over.

You know, I think the Afghan security forces, along with the coalition, are the home team now. It used to be the Taliban were the home team, that they had the inside vector on things in Afghanistan, in Helmand province. But the Taliban have lost that support network, and I believe the Afghans now have it. And it's theirs to lose.

Over.

MR. SELBY: Thank you, sir.

GEN. TOOLAN: You're welcome.

MR. SELBY: And Chuck, you are next.

Q: Thank you for taking the call, General. Chuck Simmins from America's North Shore Journal. Could you speak a little bit about the militaries from the allies that worked with you in Helmand and in Nimroz, especially some of the smaller countries like the Estonians?

GEN. TOOLAN: No, that's -- I haven't had that question. That's a good one. And I'd be more than happy to talk about them because there are some great -- there are some really good ones.

As you know, we had -- I had about 19,000, 20,000 Marines. And I had close to about 13,000 of other coalition forces. And the other coalition forces were comprised of predominantly the Brits. They were a big number. I think it was upwards of about 9,500 of those guys.

And the U.K. is a tremendous partner, particularly for the U.S. Marine Corps. I mean, I find that we're very similar in approach. You know, and the reality is the British army, the entire British army is about the same size as the -- as the Marine Corps. So, you know, they laugh when we say we're a small corps because -- but we got more than what they got in their entire army.

However, during my time, I was -- I had two rotations. One is I had the 3 Commando Brigade from the Royal Marines, along with other army forces, Royal Irish, Royal Fusiliers, et cetera. And the soldier -- the British soldier is very, very capable, gets COIN, understands it, is comfortable working in the -- in the environment and comfortable working close hand -- you know, hand in glove, kind of, with the Afghans as they assume the adviser role.

I think politically, you know, the U.K. has got some challenges because the government has had quite a bit of discussion about, you know, how long will they be in Afghanistan and how long will they continue to, you know, give up their national treasure. I mean, it's (as I said, ?) very difficult issue in the U.K., as it is in the -- in any

country, in the U.S. as well. But I think the prime minister has, you know, had to defend his position numerous times in the Parliament.

The U.K. is focused in the central Helmand Valley. They're responsible for three districts: Nad Ali, Nar-e Saraj and Lashkar Gah. And there is no political appetite for them to take on any more battlespace. With that said, they're doing a tremendous job with the three that they have. And we could not do it without them.

And then you talk about the provincial reconstruction team, which is also U.K.-led. And they have shown time and time again that it's a team effort and that, you know, their expertise, their money, their contributions, along with what the U.S. puts in and, actually, the Danes into the PRT, that we're really working very well together.

The smaller countries like, for example, I also have the UAE and Jordan -- they -- we're using them in a variety of different roles. The UAE have Black Hawk helicopters. They got Apaches. And they really do a great job of supporting some of our special operations forces conducting what we call village stability operations. And they're doing a pretty good job. You know, they're a pretty nascent special operations force, and so, you know, they work very closely with ours in a -- (inaudible) -- relationship. And they're making some great process.

And like I said, Jordan, Bahrain are conducting security operations in our -- in our forward operating bases and adding significantly to the security of our bases.

I want to highlight the Georgians. The Georgians own battlespace. And you know, any country that owns battlespace is an indication that that country understands COIN, gets command and control and all the war fighting functions and can operate effectively.

And the Georgians have come a long way. They've partnered with the U.S. Marine Corps now for the past, really, 10 years, and now we have a regular rotation of Georgians. In fact, come September, it will be -- we're getting an additional battalion of Georgians, which is great timing because, come September, we actually draw down to -- (inaudible).

And then the Danes, the Danes are also a good force. I will say that it took them a while to sort of, you know, get their feet under them and get comfortable in using some of their assets, but they have been operating in Nar-e Saraj alongside the British, and as it stands right now, Nar-e Saraj is one of the most kinetic districts in all of Afghanistan. And the Danes are right in the middle of it. So, you know, although I thought there was a little bit of hesitation to get out and mix it up, they've proven time and again now that they really are up to the task.

Unfortunately, the Danes are going to reduce their numbers pretty significantly in the operational side, but they're going to contribute a little more effectively in the training and advising role. So that's a good thing.

But, you know, they say that coalition warfare is a very difficult thing to participate in, but I'll tell you, it would be a heck of a lot harder if we didn't have the coalition members. So I think it's definitely -- the challenges associated with coalition warfare are well worth it.

Over.

Q: Thank you, sir.

GEN. TOOLAN: You're welcome.

MR. SELBY: And Dale, you're next.

Q: Good afternoon, General. Thank you very much for taking your time. This is Dale Kissinger from MilitaryAvenue.com.

I saw some great pictures of civil affairs efforts by the Marines in your provinces where you were in command of. What event or activity or act made you the most proud of the Marines under your command during the year you were deployed in Afghanistan? GEN. TOOLAN: That's a good question. I don't know if I've actually thought about the one I'm most proud of, but I would say that, you know, as I mentioned earlier, I think that the Kajaki Dam, taken over by the Taliban and the insurgents -- and most of the power that was being produced on the dam as well as really control in the irrigation flow was -- the benefits and the benefactors were either Taliban or friends of Taliban. The government was getting very little, if any, revenue from the power provided by the dam.

And in October of 2011, we shaped the environment so that we could get up to Kajaki and take control of that dam and begin the projects that really are going to revamp -- really going to bring Helmand province back to its time in the early '60s, when USAID turned Helmand River Valley into the, you know, breadbasket of -- or attempted to turn Helmand River Valley into the breadbasket of South Asia.

But by the time the turbines were planted into Kajaki Dam, it was only a couple of years before the Soviets came in and really destroyed an awful lot of that, so it never got an opportunity to flourish. But now I'm seeing the dam and I'm seeing the potential, and I'm seeing the fact that now that the government's got control of the dam, they're getting revenue and they have some leverage with the local community. The local community is saying, OK, it looks like the government is in control; I think I'll side with them.

So I think the potential is probably -- is humongous. And so I think we're pretty proud of the whole process of conducting the offensive operations to get there, and then having the plan in place with USAID to now get that dam functioning and get the power -- (inaudible) -- up, et cetera.

On a smaller scale, I will tell you that one of the things that's had the biggest difference has been, you know, the 1,072 kilometers of road that we've put into Helmand province.

There was an article written in The Wall Street Journal by a guy named Nissenbaum, who really was very critical of our efforts in building roads, called it "Roads to Nowhere." And you know, he made it sound like we really were just wasting money on building roads just because it was a job, employment, et cetera.

But I can tell you that -- and every engineer and every guy that worked on those roads every day was facing the threat of IEDs. I mean, it took a lot of courage to get out there every day and build these roads, but they did it. And it's changed. It's changed the -- transformed many of those districts and the province, and people are getting jobs, they're getting commercial benefit. Agribusiness is developing.

So I guess really, as far as accomplishment, I'll tell you the roads, but as far as future potential, certainly the dam is going to make a huge difference.

Over.

Q: Thank you very much, sir. That was great.

GEN. TOOLAN: Thanks.

MR. SELBY: Thank you, sir, and Andrew, you were next.

Q: Sure. General, good afternoon. Andrew Lubin, Leatherneck Magazine. How are you, sir?

GEN. TOOLAN: Very good, thank you.

Q: OK, thanks.

General, you mentioned parasitic corruption, which is predominantly the ANP. When I was in your AO, I was down with the Texas reserves down south of Leatherneck, had a major problem with the ANP shaking down the locals. How would you train them? What are you doing, that that stops?

GEN. TOOLAN: Was that you with the 125?

Q: (Audio break) -- sir.

GEN. TOOLAN: Oh, wow. Great unit. The --

Q: Yeah, they were. I spent 10 days with them. They were a busy group -- busy young group of young Marines.

GEN. TOOLAN: Yeah, they did everything. They did windows. They -- whatever we did -- whatever they were asked for, they did it.



It's a great -- that's the great thing about our reservists, though, is that, you know, when you look at an organization in the reserves and you realize that there's somebody -- everybody has a job, and it's all different, and when you put it all together, you almost got an entire village of, you know, people doing different things. So -- very talented group.

I -- when I talked about parasitic corruption, I was referring to senior government officials in this -- predominantly in the central government. And I use the example of Sher Mohammad Akinzada (sp), who's a senator and definitely a negative influence there. And that, to me, is parasitic, because he's really benefiting on the fact that the government's still weak and still growing and sort of it's a weak host.

The other type of corruption that I mentioned was the predatory corruption, which I think is endemic and certainly a threat. It's not endemic in the Helmand province, but it is a threat, it is present among the Afghan national security forces. And you're absolutely right; you know, the police are the primary organization that we have to worry about, because they're the ones that have the closest control, closest interaction with the people. And so if they prey on the locals because the police are the ones inside the population centers -- by their preying on them, they're going to lose anything that's been gained as far as support of the local nationals.

I think I mentioned, you know, we are the home team. We weren't necessarily the home team two years ago. Two years ago, the Taliban were. They were integrated into every village and every district. Shadow governance was the predominant governance, and they were in control. And the legitimate governance was -- really was nonexistent. If you think, in the past three years, how we've now developed a rule of law where we have prosecutors, we have judges, we've got courts, we've got detention facilities, all of that stuff has occurred over the past three years, and because of it, because we now have systems in place where we hold people accountable, as well as development projects, as well as, you know, good leadership in the Afghan national security forces, people are coming back to it.

So now the -- with the local nationals supporting the Afghan national security forces, we're the home team. We have the inside advantage. And I think it's going to -- it's going to continue to make a difference. But if we lose it, if the police become susceptible -- and they are -- to predatory corruption, we could lose those gains. And the key to -- the key to it is -- and to -- and to be honest, you know, the guys in uniform have been dabbling in law enforcement, because really, until we shift from combat operations to, you know, criminal investigations and evidence collection, we're not going to get to that level where the police can, you know, earn their role as community police.

So I guess the police are critical, and we just need to maintain a good adviser-trainer role. And we need to get out of dabbling -- military guys get out of dabbling in police work and start bringing in law enforcement professionals at a significant number so that we can make

an impact. The environment is secure enough so that they can operate. It wasn't a year and a half ago, but it is now, and so that's where we're going to make the difference, I think.

Q: General, could you replace them then with the Afghan local police? If you look at Mirza in Marja, he's done a great job there. Could you -- can you find 20 more like him?

GEN. TOOLAN: You know, the Afghan local police were critical -- critically important to establishing security, in Marja in particular. Without the ALP, we would -- we wouldn't be where we are in Marja right now.

But the issue is, is that, you know, the ALP come at a big expense. Right now, we've had -- I've had to commit conventional forces to closely monitoring and supervising the ALP.

What we eventually have to do is we have to transition and move the ALP into the Afghan National Police. And the only challenge, really, with that, is -- you know, there is a lot -- there were a lot of ALP in Marja. We have to find them alternative jobs. Either they go to the police, and not all of them can, because we don't -- we can't sustain those huge numbers -- or we got to get them trained through vocational training, motorcycle mechanics, et cetera.

The ALP come at a risk, and that risk, again, is that predatory corruption. So we have to monitor very closely. And as conventional forces back away from advising and training them, we've got to set the mechanisms up so that the AUP, the police, take responsibility for the ALP in their role and where they can bring in those -- the best guys they can into the police.

One of the biggest challenges, really, with ALP is -- it's amazing, but those guys that join the ALP, they want to stay home. They don't want to go anywhere else. And even within the AUP, they still move around district to district within the province, and they don't like that. So that's why the ALP has become, for those kind of guys, an accommodation.

Q: Thank you, sir. GEN. TOOLAN: You're welcome.

MR. SELBY: Thank you very much, sir. And on to Gale.

Q: General Gail Harris with the Foreign Policy Association. I was wondering if you had a chance to read that article in the Armed Forces Journal by -- Journal by Lieutenant Colonel Davis. And if you have, what were your thoughts on the article?

GEN. TOOLAN: No, I did read it. And I -- you know, it's definitely something that -- I don't want to be that senior officer person that he refers to. I try not to turn a blind eye to the -- to the challenges that exist in Afghanistan. It's not all rosy, as I painted just earlier about -- the threat to corruption; it's very real, various levels.

And, you know, as a -- as a senior person, I -- as I evaluate our progress in Afghanistan, I think, as I mentioned in my introductory comments, you know, we've made some progress in development and governance, and, you know, we've provided the proper force densities in places in order to bring stability.

But, you know, we also have significant issues that I don't know if we can -- certainly that we can in uniform solve, like the borders. I can't stop the flow of lethal aid into Afghanistan. I can interdict it when it gets there. I can't stop the flow of drugs out of Afghanistan through Pakistan and Iran. And those have a significant impact on the environment. And until we make arrangements, until we can get the cooperation of some of the border countries, this problem will persist.

Additionally, you know, the drug industry in Helmand province in particular is huge.

Some people estimate, you know, a billion-dollar profit being made just in Helmand. That doesn't include how much money is made on those drugs when they're moved out of Afghanistan.

It's very hard to compete with, you know, a billion dollars going into the coffers of the criminal patrons' networks, and a good portion of that being paid out to fuel the insurgency. But we're trying. We're trying to bring in some really talented, smart people from Treasury Department, et cetera, to figure out how they finance these -- this movement of drugs back and forth and go after the hawalas and hawaladars.

But you know, again, the big picture -- you -- everybody sees it at different level. I think -- yeah, I think Dave (sp) has brought up some good points. But this is -- in -- certainly in my case, there is no purposeful trying to distort the picture and make it look like it's better than it is. In fact, I think I've been more critical of our -- of our efforts -- right, so -- I think -- I think that was the gist of his article, right?

Q: Yes, it was. Thank you. That -- I -- in fact, I blogged about that for the Foreign Policy Association and said, you know, it's -- depends on the perspective that you're at. My take was not that any of the senior officers that I'd been honored to interview had never -- had been pretty consistent about the challenges in Afghanistan. And I certainly did not get the impression that they were not being honest. So thank you for your thoughts.

GEN. TOOLAN: You're welcome.

MR. SELBY: And Rita, you are next on the line.

Q: Yes, hello, sir. Rita Boland from SIGNAL. I wanted to build upon what you were saying earlier about law enforcement officers and training. And I was wondering if there are any programs or talk about programs that would bring in law enforcement officers from

nonmilitary organizations in the U.S. or allied countries to do training and play a direct role in forming the Afghan National Police.

GEN. TOOLAN: You know what, it -- the model that I have in my mind is, having been the -- I was the J5 at Shape (ph) back during the Bosnia days -- was the police force that we brought into Sarajevo and spread them out to various places. And you know, they were generated at NATO headquarters from all the European countries. That was tremendous. You know, we brought in the gendarmerie, the Italian Carbonari and the Guardia from Spain. I mean, it was just -- constables out of the U.K. -- it was a huge force. It was -- the numbers were probably upwards of about 5,000. And then they used them in -- pretty effectively in Bosnia and then working alongside the police forces.

That's kind of the model that I think needs to be built. It's -- the environment is relatively safe now that they can operate without, you know, significant threat to their life. There's certainly going to be some, but -- and I think that's the model that I'm talking about and putting -- right now we have some law enforcement professionals, but not enough to really operate and work with each and every precinct in the province. And the Danes, for example -- we have put together a Helmand Police Training Center, which is pretty well-designed, and it's got some pretty good resources and people there. And so that's a start, because we get at the basic training, but we still need those to go outside the training venue and work alongside, riding alongside the Afghans to really make a difference and understand the -- you know, what they face every day.

Over.

Q: Thank you.

MR. SELBY: Thank you, sir.

And I'm not sure, but I think there might be somebody who doesn't have their mute button on. Just to make sure everybody does.

And we have one last blogger that was on the line, Sandra.

Q: Yes, hi, General. Good afternoon. Sandra Erwin with National Defense. I wanted to also ask you a question about training. You talked about the -- obviously, the need to continue the training of the Afghan security forces and the police. Now there's a lot of speculation that the U.S. may consider accelerating the withdrawal of U.S. troops. So potentially, there may be, you know, fewer troops than potentially would be necessary for the training. There may be fewer allied troops as well. So would you possibly recommend or would you be for or against outsourcing some of that training to the private sector? Do you believe the private sector is qualified to do that? And could they potentially pick up some of the slack?

GEN. TOOLAN: Yeah, I mean, that's a -- that's a good question. As I just mentioned just previously, I think in regards to policing, I think that it needs to be turned over to the professionals

who really -- the professionals for law enforcement are not in the military. So whether it's contracted out or the countries commit to providing some of their national police forces -- you know, it's a little bit harder for the U.S. because, you know, a lot of our police forces are local. But, you know, I think we have to rely upon civilian efforts to get the police to where it needs to be.

I don't think that it's healthy to, you know, contract out, to provide training to the Afghan National Army. I think that's in our purview, and that's something that we need to continue to do ourselves. And hence I see us going beyond 2014. I see us going much further beyond 2014 in regards to military support to the -- to the Afghan National Army in a couple of areas.

I think, number one, from a special operations perspective, it's going to take several more years to build a proficient special operations forces in Afghanistan. So they -- the -- we need to -- we'll be beyond 2014 with special ops -- backing up, supporting and training.

I think in the area of intelligence, not so much in the human area, because I think they're pretty good at it, but in the other areas, like intelligence and surveillance and reconnaissance and those kinds of things, we're going to get -- have to provide that to the Afghans for years to come before they can develop any capability themselves, particularly as the Afghan National Army go to the borders and the police take over the population centers, you know, and so the police are out of the paramilitary business and the ANA's back doing national security issues.

Also, too, we are working at it, but it's going to take time to build a proficient medical capability in the Afghan national -- in -- so the -- for the Afghans -- to support the Afghan national security forces. They -- they're spoiled, to be quite honest, because, you know, our MEDEVAC system and our medical system's providing an awful lot of care. Today's day and age, the Afghans are suffering more casualties than the coalition forces and, you know, we're there. They're spoiled; they know it's good, and they don't want to lose it. And if -- and if the first thing you ask an Afghan, the one that scares him is not being able to help them develop a proficient health care capability or even just a MEDEVAC and trauma kind of care. So they got a ways to come there. And you know, there's probably a couple of other areas where I think, yes, we can contract out; no, I think certain areas our military needs to be there for a while past 2014 in order to help them refine and build those capabilities I just mentioned.

Does that make sense?

Q: Mmm hmm. (Affirmative.) Yes, thank you very much, General.

GEN. TOOLAN: (Inaudible.)

MR. SELBY: Sir, thank you very much for that, and I think we're right about at our allotted time today. So, if you have any closing comments, sir, that would be great.

GEN. TOOLAN: I just hope that, you know, certainly the point of this is just to try and get out a balanced perspective. You know, things are good, not great. And you know, as we look towards the future, we still -- there're some things we need to be worried about, and corruption stands to the forefront. So -- but I appreciate your attention.

MR. SELBY: Thank you very much, and we really appreciate having you on the call today, and thank you to everybody else that was on the call today that participated.

Today's program will be available online at [dodlive.mil](http://dodlive.mil) where you -- (inaudible, audio interference) -- a story based on today's call, along with source documents, such as the audio file and a print transcript.

Again, thank you to everybody on the line, especially Major General John Toolan. This concludes today's call. Feel free to disconnect at this time.

Q: All right, thanks, William.

MR. SELBY: Yes, thank you to everybody on the line.

Q: Thanks, William. Thanks a lot; appreciate it.

MR. SELBY: Yep.

END.